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INTERNATIONAL DAY OF LA FRANCOPHONIE

Statement by:

The Honourable Claudette Tardif

Wednesday, March 20, 2013

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[Translation]

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Hon. Claudette Tardif (Deputy Leader of the Opposition): Honourable senators, on this International Day of La Francophonie, we join with nearly 10 million Canadians and over 200 million francophones in 75 countries throughout the world who are pleased to express their francophone identity, which is seen in every aspect of our society.

Our country's history has been shaped by our Francophonie as it evolved from generation to generation. The Francophonie in Canada is becoming increasingly diverse and holds a place in our economy, our work, our schools, our institutions, our communities and our digital world.

International Day of La Francophonie reminds us that the Francophonie is much more than a history-based heritage; it is a culture and a daily way of life for thousands of people, and it must be recognized. One thing is for certain, Canada's Francophonie contributes to building a rich society that is open to the world.

The people of my generation and many pioneers before them have demonstrated the importance of the French language. They fought for the development of their communities and won, all while fostering a culture that defends its language. As a result of

demographic and social changes, the integration of a growing number of francophone immigrants, the commitment of francophone youth and partnerships that are growing stronger, we are increasingly adopting an attitude that highlights the assets and advantages that Canada's Francophonie provides in every area.

Learning French is more valued in our society. More and more senior positions in our public and private institutions require knowledge of French. Increased communication and trade broadens the scope of the Francophonie every day. For example, last week, during the official visit to Canada of the Prime Minister of France, Jean-Marc Ayrault, wonderful partnerships were formed between France and Canada to promote our common values in the scientific, economic, academic and cultural arenas.

This year in Canada, the fifteenth edition of the "Rendez-vous de la Francophonie" is taking place from March 8 to 24. Various cultural events will be held across the country. In Alberta for instance, 23 flag raising ceremonies featuring the Franco-Albertan flag took place in 21 communities.

Honourable senators, let us hope that the Canadian Francophonie will continue to assert itself with strength and conviction, both within Canada and around the world. Happy International Day of La Francophonie!
